1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them while she does her other work, but when they are old enough, they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when house repairs are needed or there are implements to be mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

The times for meals have not varied since the days when Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is interrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

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The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, "Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a "married" wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time of her "legal" marriage, though dowries are rarely given among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her "marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

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case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

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The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

Are women more conservative than men in respect to cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

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476 241 533 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[A]

476 241 461 504 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayamba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 505 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[A] [For footnote see Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home.

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in.

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre-

3. See chap. XVIII.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit un-
659 limited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
771 the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
184 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage.

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures.

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society.

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1892), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 315–321.

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562 The male, by contrast, is master in all matters, including those pertaining to home life. Obviously, he is much freer in his sexual life than is his wife.

586 Divorce is comparatively rare, thanks to the careful solicitude of all parties before formal marriage is contracted, and to the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Since the husband is not, by custom or by public opinion, bound to limit his sexual attentions to his legal wife, one of the common causes of divorce is removed. The code allows formal divorce to the husband for the wife's adultery, and to the wife for her husband's adultery "when he shall bring his concubine into the common dwelling house." Both spouses may secure divorce for excess, for injurious cruelty, for life sentences imposed by a court—"*peines afflictives et infamantes.*" A woman whose marriage has been dissolved by divorce cannot remarry before the expiration of one year, nor is she permitted to remarry her former husband. The opposition of the Church to divorce is a distinct deterrent to elite women who crave freedom, for women are generally the more devout members of the Church.

[837] [587] [562] [771]

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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried.

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence.

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question.

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely.

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why.

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers.

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant.

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious.

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It